

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

October 7, 2022

Director Charles F. Sams III
National Park Service
1849 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Director Sams,

We are reaching out concerning your lottery system for several attractions at park units across the United States.

We acknowledge that often times these lottery systems were established due to concerns around overcrowding, damage to park resources, or other reasons. There isn't a specific law that articulates National Park Services' (NPS) authority to institute lottery systems, rather, the agency relies on its general authority under the *Organic Act of 1916* to administer lands and resources under their jurisdiction. Specifically, the *Organic Act* directs NPS "...to conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and the wildlife therein and to provide for the enjoyment of the same in such manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations" (Act of Aug. 25, 1916, ch. 408, §1, 39 Stat. 535.). We understand that each park administers their own lottery system with varying requirements from unit to unit. We would like to bring to your attention on how these lottery systems affect our active-duty military, Gold Star families, and Veterans.

Last year, Congress passed legislation providing free annual America the Beautiful passes for active-duty personnel and free lifetime passes for Gold Star Families and Veterans in the Alexander Lofgren Veterans in Parks (VIP) Act (see [Public Law 117-81](#); National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2022). Even though these groups already have free access to National Parks, there are not spots reserved in these lottery systems for them, often resulting in them not being selected.

We seek answers to the following questions:

1. How many national park units institute a lottery system restricting access to certain portions of the park?
2. How many national park units require pre-registration and/or a fee to enter the lottery system?
3. How many active-duty military, Gold Star families, and Veterans annually attend any of the national park units?

We request that the National Park Service institute a policy for lottery systems that would set aside a portion of the lottery selections to be reserved for active-duty military (personnel and dependents), Gold Star families, and Veterans.

These women and men who serve our country stand as heroes for all Americans. This is a small change but would have a positive impact on all active-duty military, Gold Star families, and Veterans. We appreciate your attention to this matter and request a response no later than October 24th, 2022. We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



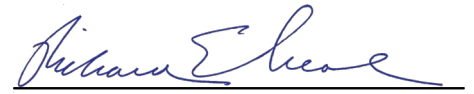
Ben Cline
Member of Congress



Chris Pappas
Member of Congress




Ted Budd
Member of Congress



Richard E. Neal
Member of Congress



Paul D. Tonko
Member of Congress



David B. McKinley, P.E.
Member of Congress



Robert J. Wittman
Member of Congress



Fred Keller
Member of Congress



Doug LaMalfa
Member of Congress



Jim Costa
Member of Congress



Louie Gohmert
Member of Congress



Young Kim
Member of Congress



Ken Buck
Member of Congress



Conor Lamb
Member of Congress



Trent Kelly
Member of Congress



Daniel Meuser
Member of Congress



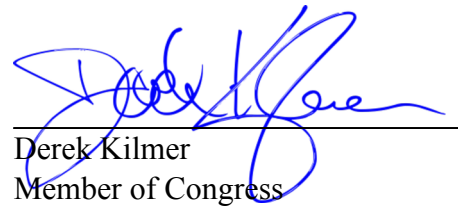
Josh Gottheimer
Member of Congress



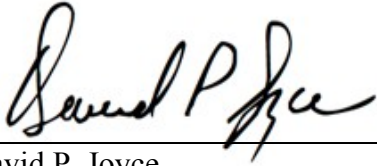
Byron Donalds
Member of Congress



Madeleine Dean
Member of Congress



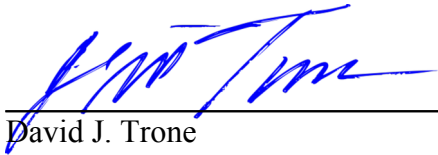
Derek Kilmer
Member of Congress

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "David P. Joyce", written over a horizontal line.

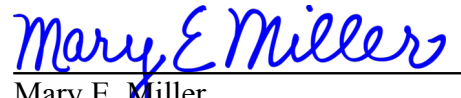
David P. Joyce
Member of Congress

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Susie Lee", written over a horizontal line.

Susie Lee
Member of Congress

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "David J. Trone", written over a horizontal line.

David J. Trone
Member of Congress

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Mary E. Miller", written over a horizontal line.

Mary E. Miller
Member of Congress